

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 2198

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, MO, US
SUBJECT: F-5A AIRCRAFT FOR MOROCCO

REF: (A) STATE 092533, (B) AMMAN 1560 (C) STATE 098273

1. FOLLOWING IS RESPONSE TO QUERY IN REFTEL A AS TO HOW JORDANIANS ARE LIKELY TO REACT TO PROBABLE GOM DECISION NOT TO PURCHASE F-5E/F AIRCRAFT. MOROCCAN ACTION INDICATES CONSEQUENT LIKELIHOOD THAT THIS WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR JORDANIANS TO OBTAIN F-5E'S FROM MOROCCO IN RETURN FOR ANY OF THE F-5A'S TO BE SUPPLIED BY GOJ TO MOROCCO UNDER REPLACEMENT AGREEMENT (REF B).

2. WE BELIEVE A FEW JORDANIANS (TO INCLUDE RJAF COMMANDER, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT KING HUSSEIN) MAY ALREADY BE AWARE FROM NORTHROP THAT MOROCCAN F5E PURCHASE IS IN TROUBLE. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THIS WILL AFFECT KING HUSSEIN'S COMMITMENT TO MOROCCANS TO SUPPLY THESE AIRCRAFT WHICH IRAN ORIGINALLY GAVE TO JORDAN. KING HAS ALSO SAID HE IS PREPARED TO DO WITH THESE AIRCRAFT WHATEVER THE SHAH WANTS HIM TO DO. THE SHAH'S REACTION IS UNKNOWN. AT SAME TIME, THERE IS STRONG PRESSURE FROM HIS AIR FORCE COMMANDER NOT TO TRANSFER THE F-5A'S, AND THIS PRESSURE WILL BECOME GREATER WHEN WORD GETS AROUND
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THAT F-5A'S ARE TO BE TRANSFERRED AND THERE IS NO LIKELI-

HOOL OF ANY F-5E REPLACEMENT OF ANY KIND. (WE PRESUME MOROCCO'S CURRENT INVENTORY OF F-5A'S WOULD CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE FOR REPLACEMENT). WE ALSO BELIEVE THIS PRESSURE WILL BE EXERTED ON USG TO GET IT TO AGREE TO HELP UNDERWRITE A PAY BACK OF SOME SORT OF POSSIBLY, WHEN AND IF PAY BACK IS NOT POSSIBLE, TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REPLACEMENT. ALTHOUGH JORDANIANS REALIZE OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MAP OR FMS CREDIT BEYOND OUR NORMAL PROGRAM IS LIMITED, KING MAY STILL HOPE TO PRY SOME SURPLUS VIETNAM F-5A'S FROM US NOTWITHSTANDING OUR REPEATED TURNDOWNS ON THIS ISSUE FROM WHICH HE IS STILL SMARTING. KING TELLS US HIS HIGHEST PRIORITY NEXT TO AIR DEFENSE IS SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN RJAF AIRCRAFT. THEREFORE WE DOUBT THAT HE WILL SUFFER A PERMANENT LOSS LIGHTLY.

3. SINCE WE THINK JMS. WILL INEVITABLY GET SOME OF THE BLAME IN ANY CASE AND IN ORDER TO AFFECT THE PROCESS, WE BELIEVE THAT BEFORE WE DECIDE TO GO TO THE CONGRESS ON THE TRANSFER, WE SHOULD CHECK AGAIN WITH KING HUSSEIN AND INFORM HIM THAT WE NOW HAVE DOUBTS THAT MOROCCO WILL GET THE F-5E AND TALK THE CONSEQUENCES THROUGH WITH HIM. WE WOULD ALSO REPEAT AGAIN THAT USG IS NOT AND WILL NOT BE IN POSITION TO PROVIDE REPLACEMENT. WE WOULD ACCORDINGLY MENTION THAT PM RIFAI HAS GIVEN US COPY OF AGREEMENT SIGNED BY RIFAI AND GOM PRIME MINISTER THAT MOROCCO WOULD REPLACE THE TRANSFER AIRCRAFT ONE-FOR-ONE AND THAT WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT THIS NOW MEANS THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY RETURN 20 F-5A'S FROM JORDANIAN AIRCRAFT ON LOAN OR FROM MOROCCAN F-5A INVENTORY (WE PRESUME WHEN THE MIRAGE F-1'S ARRIVE OR THE ALGERIAN DISPUTE SHOWS A MARKED IMPROVEMENT.) WE WOULD ALSO TELL HIM THAT RIFAI HAS ASSURED US THAT GOJ FULLY UNDERSTANDS THAT "US. BEARS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPLACING THE AIRCRAFT."

4. ALL OF THE ABOVE ASSUMES OF COURSE THAT USG STILL IS WILLING TO GIVE PERMISSION FOR THE JORDANIAN F-5A TRANSFER IF KING DOES NOT HOLD USG RESPONSIBLE FOR REPLACEMENTS AND THAT CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER CON-
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SIDERATIONS WILL POSE NO PROBLEM. IF HOWEVER, THERE ARE SERIOUS CONGRESSIONAL OR OTHER IMPEDIMENTS, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT THEM, BECAUSE IT COULD WELL AFFECT OUR APPROACH ON THE ISSUE.

5. REFTEL C, WHICH INDICATED DEPT READY TO SUBMIT TRANSFER OF 20 F-5AS TO CONGRESS ON APRIL 26 JUST RECEIVED HERE. WE BELIEVE NEVERTHELESS THE ABOVE-MENTIONED

COURSE OF ACTION IS STILL ADVISEABLE PRIOR TO SUBMITTING
20 F-5A TRANSFER TO CONGRESS. WE THEREFORE REQUEST
DEPARTMENT HOLD OFF ON APRIL 26 PLANNED SUBMISSION
UNTIL WE CHECK WITH KING HUSSEIN. PLEASE ADVISE
DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE WITH OUR SUGGESTED APPROACH.
PICKERING

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